



River Guide 6: Norden Bridge to Meadville

River Mile: 35.2 to 46.0

Stream Gradient: 6.9 feet/mile

Few paddlers float this stretch of river. Be sure to get prior permission from the The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) **Niobrara Valley Preserve** (402-722-4440) to access the river. Just north of the bridge is a steep dirt road down to a bench. Park here without blocking the path for others. You may need a four-wheel-drive vehicle to get back up this bank to the county road. Norden Falls is located just upstream of the bridge. Many locals like to fish this deep, swift chute for channel catfish.

Norden Bridge to Eagle Rapids



Put in below the Norden Chute on a sandy bank. Just downstream you will pass TNC headquarters (a cabin is located on river right). The next few miles are a pleasant float with a mostly well defined channel. Various river birds are plentiful, like great-blue herons, osprey, ducks and sandpipers. Around **Turkey Creek** (river left) is a long set of rapids (Class II). Get out and scout them – portage if in doubt. Depending on

river conditions they can present waves up to several feet high and may approach Class III status in high water. Under normal conditions there is an opening set of rapids situated over a rock ledge; a little further downstream the channel bears left over another ledge, then a stretch of waves bids paddlers farewell at the end of the quarter-mile long chute.

Eagle Rapids to Meadville Bridge

East of here the river spreads out and become braided. Careful route-finding by the bow paddler can often avoid the need to drag your canoe over shallow sandbars to find the right channel. You'll pass **Huddle Table**, a high, flat-topped hill, on river left after 6-7 miles. If observant, you may spy the Cub Creek bridge on river left. Finally the river bears south and a few cabins can be seen ahead on river left. Once you gain the bend

the river heads back east; **Plum Creek** enters ahead on river right. Before passing under the Meadville Bridge, take out at the campground on river left. This is a private campground and picnic area. A day-use fee is charged for river users. When open the Meadville Store has hot food, ice cream and other refreshments.



A ranger takes on Eagle Rapids (Class II)